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
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AN ARCHAIC ETRUSCAN STATUETTE

[PLATES III-IV]

MR. J. PIERPONT MORGAN has lately come into the possession of an Etruscan bronze statuette of great importance.¹ From an artistic point of view it easily ranks as one of the finest Etruscan statuettes in existence, and archaeologically it is significant in affording a striking illustration of both the capabilities and the limitations of the Etruscan artist.

The statuette is $11\frac{9}{16}$ in. (29.4 cm.) high, and represents a girl standing erect, with left foot slightly advanced (PLATES III, IV). The right arm is bent forward at the elbow and probably held some object; the left is lowered and is grasping a fold of the drapery. She wears a long, sleeved chiton and a himation, arranged in broad vertical folds and passing from the right shoulder to below the left arm; also laced shoes with upturned, pointed toes, rosette-shaped earrings, a necklace of beads, and a fillet decorated with three rosettes. Her hair is long and hangs down her back in a broad mass, the individual hairs being indicated by incised lines of great delicacy. Ornamental borders are incised both on the himation and the chiton as follows: cross-hatchings on the lower edge of the chiton and along the left side of the himation; cross-hatchings with a row of dots on the upper and lower edges of the himation; a row of dots round the armholes and up both sleeves; zigzag lines and a row of dots on the upper edge of the chiton. Scattered over the surface of the chiton are small punctured designs of triple spirals . The lower corners of the himation end in tassels. The only missing parts are the right hand from

¹ At present on exhibition in the Bronze Room (gallery 12) of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. I am indebted to Mr. Morgan for permission to publish this statuette.

above the wrist, and the left foot. The figure is cast solid and is covered with a smooth olive-green patina, but the surface is corroded in places, especially on the face.

The period to which the statuette belongs can be fixed without difficulty as the latter part of the sixth century B.C., both from its general style and from its resemblance as regards attitude and dress to the "Acropolis maidens" and similar marble, bronze, and terracotta figures of that time. That it is Etruscan and not Greek is shown by the shoe with turned-up toe, which was the regular shape employed by the Etruscans during the archaic period,¹ but which was foreign to Greek use.² Moreover, a detailed examination of the statuette will bring out many differences between it and contemporary Greek figures, which will demonstrate just how far the Etruscan artist succeeded and how far he failed to attain the level of his best Greek models.

First as regards the pose. In this the maker of the statuette can be said to have wholly succeeded. It has all the grace and delicate charm which distinguish archaic Greek art, without giving any suggestion of artificiality due to imitation; also the gesture of the left hand, with thumb and forefinger clasping the drapery and the three other fingers extended to their full length and bent slightly backward, is a small affectation not quite true to nature, but rendered here with great effect.

Again, in the modelling the artist attained a large measure of success. The features are carefully rendered and no longer in the primitive manner, but in the developed archaic style. The eyes are slightly narrowed and the eyeballs not so prominent as in the earliest figures. The representation of the mouth is also more adequately dealt with; for it is no longer a simple curve or line with turned-up corners, resulting in the archaic smile, but is carefully modelled, an effort being made to form a transition from the extremities of the lips to the cheeks. The chin and the cheek-bones are still strongly

¹ Cf. representations on paintings of the period, e.g. Martha, *L'Art étrusque*, pl. IV, and Figs. 285, 286; and numerous archaic Etruscan statuettes.

² L. Heuzey, in Daremberg and Saglio, *Dictionnaire*, I, p. 819, mentions only one example of its occurrence on Greek monuments; namely, a relief from Sparta.

marked, as always in archaic art, but no longer with any exaggeration. The neck is thick-set and the formation of the throat is hardly indicated; but in the rest of the figure there is a distinct attempt to make the forms of the body show through the drapery, the rendering of the chest being particularly good. Noteworthy is also the careful indication of the finger nails.

So far the figure stands on a high level and in no way betrays the hand of the copyist. When we come, however, to an analysis of the dress we are on different ground. Here the Etruscan artist has frankly failed to understand his models. Perhaps we cannot feel much surprised at this lack of comprehension when we consider the numerous contradictory theories which have been advanced regarding this mode of dress in modern times¹; and as a matter of fact at no period was Greek dress, at least as preserved to us on classical monuments,² more complicated and luxurious than during this time, that is, the second half of the sixth century B.C.

To understand where the artist of our statuette went astray in his rendering, we must briefly recapitulate the chief features of this early style of dress which he was trying to represent.³ The most essential part of it was the chiton, which covered the whole body from the neck to the feet. It was made of two rectangular pieces of linen, sewn together on their long sides

¹ The three main theories are: (1) that the dress consists of three different garments, first the chiton, then the chitoniscus (a sort of woolen jersey worn over the chiton), and lastly the himation (cf. e.g. Collignon, *Histoire de la sculpture grecque*, I, pp. 342 ff.); (2) that there are two garments, the chiton and the himation, the former being visible only on the left arm and shoulder, everything else being part of the himation (cf. e.g. Holwerda, *Jb. Arch. I.* 1904, pp. 10 ff.); (3) that there are two garments, the chiton and the himation, the skirt belonging to the chiton, and the himation consisting only of the upper piece fastened generally on the right shoulder and passing under the left arm (cf. e.g. Kalkmann, *Jb. Arch. I.* 1896, pp. 30 ff.; Lechat, *Au Musée de l'Acropole d'Athènes*, pp. 168 ff.; E. B. Abrahams, *Greek Dress*, pp. 87 ff.; and most recent writers on the subject).

² It is interesting to note in this connection that Solon found it necessary at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. to forbid women to go out with more than three garments (. . . ἐξιδέναι μὲν ἱματίων τριῶν μὴ πλέον ἔχουσας κελεύσας . . . Plutarch, *Solon*, XXI, 26).

³ In this short survey I have chiefly followed Lechat's description in his book *Au Musée de l'Acropole d'Athènes*, pp. 150 ff.

within a short distance of the upper corners to reserve openings for the insertion of the arms. The upper end was left open in the centre for the head, and was either sewn or fastened with brooches on the two shoulders and upper arms. Over this chiton was worn the himation. This seems to have consisted of a rectangular piece of woollen cloth draped round the body, starting from the right shoulder and passing across the chest and under the left arm so as to leave the left arm and breast uncovered. It was fastened with brooches on the right shoulder and upper arm to within a short distance from the corners, the rest of the material being allowed to hang loose on either side of the arm. The mantle was arranged in a series of broad, vertical or oblique folds, which were kept in place by a band running over its upper edge. Over this band some of the material was pulled up and allowed to fall like a sort of frill, which accounts for the uneven outline of the lower edge of the mantle.

Now to return to our statuette. The most glaring mistake is the rendering of the himation. Instead of making it pass round the figure front and back, the artist treated it merely as a sort of front panel terminated on both sides and not appearing at all at the back. This treatment results in a mass of contradictions:—

There is no clear boundary line between the chiton and the himation on the right arm, and when viewed in front the right sleeve appears to belong to the himation, while from the back it clearly is part of the chiton.

A slit running halfway down the chiton on the right side is a meaningless addition, presumably placed there as a sort of compromise, since this is the place where should have come the other edge of the himation.

A series of short oblique lines are punctured along the right side of the himation, which doubtless are meant to indicate the folds of zigzag outline formed by the loose material hanging right and left of the sleeves. As, however, no such loose material is represented in our statuette, the indication of these folds is inconsistent.

Besides these more obvious blunders there are several minor errors: The skirt when held up by the left hand and drawn tightly across the legs would naturally form a series of oblique

folds converging to the hand, and this is the way we find it represented on Greek figures. The maker of our statuette indicates these folds, but does not make them converge to the point from which the garment is pulled, thus losing their *raison d'être*. The chiton has of course a certain thickness, and must therefore be indicated as slightly raised above the skin. In our statuette, though rightly represented where it comes in contact with arms and legs, it is on one level with the neck, the edge being marked merely by incised lines. The result is decidedly confusing.

No attempt is made to represent the characteristic little folds on the upper part of the chiton, for the oblique wavy lines incised on the right side indicate the wrinkles caused by the insertion of the brooches to form the sleeve.

That the Etruscan artist succeeded sometimes in correctly representing the complicated form of himation which is here attempted, is shown by several specimens,¹ which, though of rough execution, at least carry the garment round the whole figure and thus preserve its inherent character of a mantle. It is therefore the more surprising that a maker who did so careful a piece of work as our figure should be so little conversant with what he was representing. The possibility suggests itself that he was copying from a vase-painting or from a relief, and being himself unfamiliar with the garment, naturally came to grief when he had to represent the back.

An examination of the treatment of the hair is also interesting in that it shows the same combination of success and failure. The arrangement chosen is that found on some of the Acropolis statues (cf. No. 671, Lechat, *op. cit.*, p. 153, Fig. 9), except for the omission of the locks falling in front. The hair is parted in the middle and combed to either side, presenting a wavy outline over the brow, and allowed to fall loose on the back. In addition, a strand of hair is carried forward from the top of the head, forming a long loop over each temple, and then brought back behind the ears. In our statuette these loops are not rounded off properly, but are represented as cut off sharp at their lower ends, which gives them the singular appearance

¹ Cf. e.g. Babelon et Blanchet, *Bronzes antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, No. 206.

of separate tufts of hair. The general effect, however, is admirable; and especially at the back, where the hair hangs loose, it has a very lifelike appearance, the smooth, glossy surface being represented with quite extraordinary ability.

The delicately executed decorative borders on the dress, the fillet with the rosettes,¹ the necklace, and the rosette-shaped earrings,² all find analogies in Greek representations. The tassels at the ends of the himation are commonly found in representations of this garment on vase-paintings.³

Our analysis of this statuette discloses what from other sources we have been accustomed to regard as the characteristics of Etruscan art, — namely, great skill in the rendering of detail coupled with a curious lack of feeling for the structure of the whole; witness, for instance, the representations on the Etruscan chariot in the Metropolitan Museum. But that Etruscan art, imitative though it may be, and possessing the natural defects of all imitations, is not always lifeless and clumsy as we find it in so many of its products, but could attain real artistic merit, is seen by a few fine examples,⁴ among which this statuette will occupy a conspicuous place.

In conclusion a word must be said with regard to the interpretation of this figure. It is now pretty generally agreed that the Acropolis maidens represent neither a particular goddess nor a priestess, but a mere votary;⁵ for in no instance have these maidens any definite attribute which would allow of a more particularized identification. The case is similar here; because, though the object held in the right hand is missing, there can be no doubt that it was a fruit, flower, or

¹ Many of the fillets on the Acropolis statues are pierced, showing clearly that they were originally also decorated with ornaments. Cf. *e.g.* the figure by Antenor, and Nos. 670, 673, 675.

² Almost all the Acropolis maidens wear earrings of the same shape, hiding completely the lobe of the ear.

³ Cf. Furtwängler u. Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei*, I, pls. 16, 22, 43, 44, 46, 49, etc.

⁴ Such as Babelon et Blanchet, *Bronzes antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, No. 213; Martha, *L'Art étrusque*, Figs. 338 and 339; Micali, *Monumenti inediti*, pl. XIII, 1, 2.

⁵ Cf. H. Lechat, *Au Musée de l'Acropole*, p. 276; E. A. Gardner, *Handbook of Greek Sculpture*, pp. 164 f.; etc.

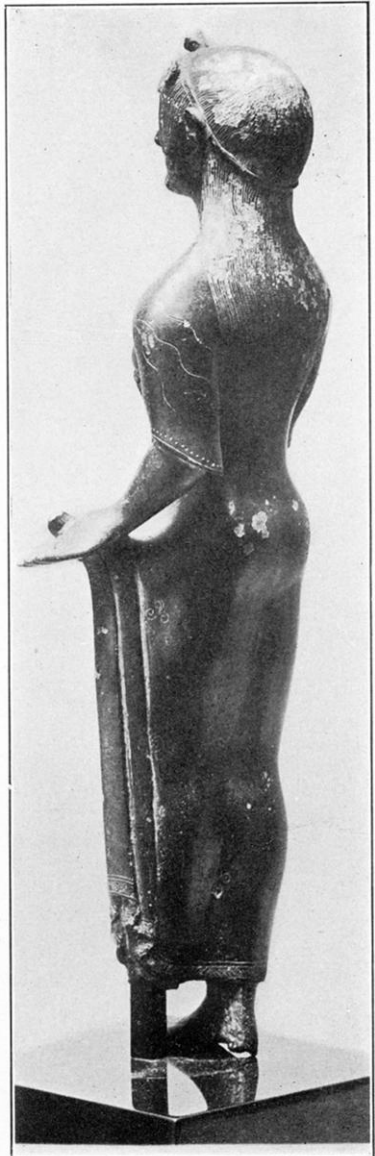
animal, such as make up the offerings held by the statues. In the absence of further evidence, therefore, we must call this statuette simply a maiden, perhaps placed as a votive offering in some sanctuary.

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ETRUSCAN STATUETTE IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



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